

THE HONORABLE JOHN C. COUGHENOUR

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF WASHINGTON  
AT SEATTLE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,  
  
Plaintiff,  
  
v.  
  
OMAR ISRAEL-MORALES,  
  
Defendant.

CASE NO. CR20-0136-JCC-3

ORDER

This matter comes before the Court on Defendant Omar Israel-Morales's unopposed motion to proceed with a guilty plea hearing by video conference (Dkt. No. 120). Having thoroughly considered the motion and the relevant record, the Court hereby GRANTS the motion for the reasons explained herein.

**I. BACKGROUND**

Mr. Israel-Morales has been charged with conspiring to distribute controlled substances and possessing fentanyl and methamphetamine with intent to distribute. (Dkt. No. 1 at 1–6.) He would like to plead guilty and proceed with the plea hearing by video conference. (Dkt. No. 120.)

**II. DISCUSSION**

Delaying Mr. Israel-Morales's plea hearing would cause serious harm to the interests of justice. *See* W.D. Wash. General Orders 04-20, 09-20, 14-20, 17-20, 06-21. Under General Order

04-21, with limited exceptions, in-person hearings will not resume until June 30, 2021. While the number of in-person proceedings that can be held in the courthouse may begin to increase in May 2021, even then, the Court will be strictly limiting the number of proceedings that can occur concurrently and the number of people who can attend those proceedings. *See* W.D. Wash. General Order 04-21 at 2. Due to rising COVID-19 cases in this District, the Court may need to extend that timeline further. Delaying Mr. Israel-Morales's plea hearing and, as a consequence, his sentencing, by at least several weeks would cause serious harm to the interests of justice because Mr. Israel-Morales has a strong interest in the speedy resolution of this matter now that he has decided to plead guilty.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

For the foregoing reasons, the Court GRANTS Defendant Omar Israel-Morales's motion to proceed with a guilty plea by video conference (Dkt. No. 120) and ORDERS that his plea hearing be scheduled before a Magistrate Judge as soon as practicable and be conducted by video conference.

DATED this 3rd day of May 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John C. Coughenour", is written over a horizontal line.

John C. Coughenour  
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE